Mahouglath-Mahouglish

By S. BARING-GOULD.

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Corea is exciting not a little interest in the world at present. There are rival claims on it; Japan, Russia, England—all desire to have a finger on it. I can recall when the peninsula was absolutely closed, when no foreigner was permitted to set foot on the soil. It was precisely for that reason, out of curiosity, and I suppose native English "cussedness," that, in 1856, I, being captain of the Curlew, on my way home from Nagasaki, altered my course and ran to Corea. I had no right to do so, but I did it because I was inquisitive to know what sort of land it was and what was the reason for the exclusiveness there practiced.

I hove in sight of the shore on the coast, near Seoul, and I got out a boat and went on shore to have a look around. We all like doing what is forbidden. It is our nature.

On the beach we were met by the local Governor, a middle-aged man with an umbrella tied under his chin, that is to say, it was without a stick and was spread above his head by bamboo canes radiating from his throat. He wore a white dress fringed with blue. He was a grave man with a long nose, and eyes that went up at the corners, and with orange lips. He was unable to oppose our landing, which had been entirely unexpected; he looked at us with an expression of sadness, and sobbed. The tears ran out of his eyes, and these being askew, they ran out of the corners nearest the nose, for the law of gravitation prevails in Corea, and they trickled down his nose, and combined at the tip of his nose into one great drop. You may have seen, gentlemen, that a duplex lamp has two burners, but produces one flame. So with this Corean's tears, they emanated from two lachrymal glands, but resulted in one drop.

I asked the Governor, through a Japanese interpreter, why he wept. He replied that in four days he would be a dead man. It would take two days for the news of my landing to reach the capital, whereupon an order for his decapitation would be made out and sent down by the royal executioner, who would behead him with a wooden sword.

"But," said I, "you were not to blame; you had not a force wherewith to resist our landing."

"That matters not," replied the Governor, "I shall be held responsible. Mahouglath-mahouglish."

"What does he mean?" I inquired of the interpreter.

"Magouglath-mahouglish has a variety of significance," he explained. "It is a proverbial expression to which the Coreans are addicted. It means: It cannot be helped. What can't be cured must be endured. All is for the best in the best of worlds. What is, is right. Let well alone."

"There seems," said I, "to be a great deal of Oriental wisdom compressed into a small space in this instance."

"Sir," said the interpreter, "it is their governing principle."

"Sir," retorted I on the Jap, "we act on the contrary principle. England would never have been what she is, had she gone on from generation to generation saying Mahouglath-mahouglish, and acquiescing in what is. It has been discontent with what is and aiming at what is not, but may be, that has made Great Britain what she is, and it is your cursed Mahouglath-mahouglish which has petrified Corea into the most stationary realm under the sun. There, sir, you need not translate this opinion of mine to the Governor, but be so good as to wipe his nose for him." Then to the Corean, "Will you do nothing to avert your fate? You have powerful influence; exert it at court."

The Corean shook his head and answered, "Mahouglath-mahouglish."

"I never saw folly equal to this," said I. "If I were a Corean I would agitate against the government that follows no other principle than take-thing-as-they-are; and pray, sir, how long do you suppose it will exact to get through that tough old neck of yours with a wooden sword?" He shook his head.

"Twenty-five minutes at the least," said I. "I know what is it with neck of lamb and a Sheffield carving knife. Why don't you run away? You have four days in which to clear off."

"Mahouglath-mahouglish."

"He means that the inevitable is not to be avoided," explained the interpreter.

"But it is to be avoided. Bless my liver! With a wooden sword too! such barbarity. I've been to Sunday school, and have got a conscience. I got you into this scrape, and I'll get you out of it. The flag of Briton flaunts above the free!"

Turning to my crew, I said:

"Boys, up with him and carry him aboard."

The sailors caught up the Corean governor, and conveyed him, stiff as a poker, to the boat. He made no resistance, nor did he express satisfaction. Of course when carried horizontally his tears could not run down and drip from his nose; they did, however, from his pendulous pigtail.

When we had the native on board we got up steam and hove anchor. The Corean stood on the deck looking at the receding shores of his native land, and said placidly:

"Mahouglath-Mahouglish."

We had roughish weather, and the passenger, unaccustomed to water, suffered somewhat. I visited him in his cabin. His face was like yellow wax.

"Never mind, old man," said I, "you'll soon get your sea legs and enjoy pork chop. There are a lot of new ideas I am going to stuff into that noddle of yours; Bass's pale ale, the British constitution, the electric telegraph, Westminster Abbey, the Thames tunnel, the daily press, zonal pelargonius, fruit salts, perambulators. How that bullet head of yours will contain all the new and explosive ideas that will be crammed into it passes my understanding."

In a little while I had to admit that it did not take in and assimilate any one of them.

When, finally, the ex-governor of the district, came on deck I saw that his fingers were busy with a piece of thin creamy white paper, neatly folded. This he pressed on me."

"Oh, thank you," said I, "there is no occasion. I rescued you out of pure humanity. I did not expect—I did not desire—but, really old man, as you set your heart on it, I will if you wish."

I slipped the packet into my waistcoat pocket, and as soon as possible descended to the cabin to examine my present. To my disappointment the paper contained nothing, nor was anything written on it.

I heard the Corean on the ladder sigh or yawn, and presently he came down folding a very similar piece of paper, this also he pressed upon me. I accepted it sulkily.

"What is the meaning of this?" I inquired of my Japanese interpreter.

He explained to me that a Corean, when he sighs, believes that he exhales a portion of his soul. Accordingly he hastens to secure it and delivers it to his best friend. This is considered to be the highest compliment and mark of confidence that one Corean can offer to another. He expects his friends to secure these particles of soul, which he will reclaim after death.

When a Corean expires the miserable remnant of his soul goes about picking up the dispersed scraps that go to complete it, and cannot attain to rest till made up. Consequently a trustee of portions of a Corean soul can expedite this blessed consummation by preserving those confided to him in a handy and come-at-able receptacle. On the other hand, he may put the soul to immense inconvenience by dissipating them, pawning or mortgaging them. But thus to treat such a trust is regarded in Corea as dishonorable and fraudulent. A trustee keeps lacquered boxes labelled with the names of his friends who confide in him, much like the boxes of an English solicitor in which are preserved the deeds of the estates he manages.

It was irksome to me on the voyage to have the passenger incessantly forcing his soul on me. As I was busy with the chart, for instance, reckoning the position of the Curlew I felt something tickle my palm, and on looking round saw the governor thrusting one of his papers under my hand, by that means disturbing my calculations. I had to begin them over again. Moreover, my rest was broken. For whenever the Corean, unable to sleep, felt a yawning he folded up his scraps of paper, and, leaving his berth, came to mine and pulled my hair or tweaked my nose till I awoke, when with grave courtesy he handed another portion of his soul to me. My pockets got stuffed with them, and when I drew out my handkerchief they flew about over the deck and engaged me in a paper chase. At last I came to a compromise with the ex-Governor. I got a large glass bottle that had contained green gage jam and was so labeled.

"Huggles," said I—Huggles the crew called him because he used the word Mahouglath—"Huggles, old man, this shall be your soul bottle. I will unfurl all the little papers and drop the contents in. Then in the after life when you are in want of the chips and shavings you'll know where to find them, labeled green gage. You understand."

I had become, against my wishes, and to my vast inconvenience, a second father to this Corean. I had given him a new spell of life. I had introduced him into a novel phase of existence. The world into which I had brought him was, at all events, the opposite to that of Corea. There nothing was ever altered. No fresh ideas ever rose to birth. There all men did and thought as their grandfathers and great-great-grandfathers had acted and thought. In the Corean world there was neither progress nor retrogression. It was at a standstill. Nothing had ever surprised any one in Corea from time immemorial, for nothing had ever been out of the routine. Consequently the faculty of feeling surprised was extinct in Coreans generally. My specimen was not out of the common run. What was not routine was to him not life, it was dream. As in sleep-life the most fantastic combinations occur without astonishing us, so to the Corean, transplanted into a progressive world, he saw, heard, smelt, tasted without entertaining any surprise at the novelties that met his sensation. His life among Europeans was a dream, from which he would only relapse when again in Corea. I tested this in several ways. In his native peninsula there were, in 1856, no firearms. After politely inviting him to seat himself astride on a brass piece of ordnance we had in the vessel, without giving him a hint that it was charged, I fired the cannon. The shock sent him up in the air eighteen inches, and he fell over on the deck, but expressed no surprise whatever. He had been gnawing the end of his pigtail before I applied the match, and as he lay on the deck after the explosion, he was still gnawing. The habit I allude to did not please me. In monkeys it is a sign of being in an unwholesome condition when they bite their tails. I am not sufficiently acquainted with Coreans to say if it be so with them.

On reaching Portsmouth after a prosperous voyage, I took my Corean to a clothier's shop, and had him rigged out in English costume—a light cutaway, snuff-colored suit, collars, a box hat, boots, gloves, pocket handkerchiefs and a set of flannel shirts.

Gentlemen, you can have no conception of the trouble it gave me to get the man into these clothes. Understand them he never did. Braces were an insoluble enigma to him. His mind was not flexible nor receptive to enable him to receive new ideas. For instance, he had a pair of dog-skin gloves, brown, stitched with black down the back. They cost me three and six. He persisted in trying to thrust his feet into them and to crush a toe into each finger. As to his braces, he made of them a cravat. I became a nurse to Huggles; he had to be dressed like a child of four. If left to himself he tangled himself up with his gloves and box-hat and trousers and paper collars, the whole interlaced inexplicably with his sheets and towels and every antimaccassar in the room, that it took me more than an hour unraveling him. His European outfit cost me 13 pounds 15 shillings. I had, moreover, to pay the hotel bill at Portsmouth for both of us, as also the double trainage to London. He had no money, and, though he offered one of his papers folded at the ticket office, the clerk refused it, saying:

"We don't take stamps."

I hurried up to town with Huggles to report myself to my employers.

Go where I would, the Corean accompanied me. I could not shake him off. He would not be left behind. Moreover, I could not trust him without a guard. How could I reckon on what a man with a stationary mind might do in a maelstrom of activity like London? I entertained great hopes of consigning him to the firm along with the cargo of the Curlew. But I was disappointed. The owners declined emphatically to have anything to do with him. More than that, they sharply reprimanded me for having gone out of my course to Corea, and pointed out to me that I had transgressed rules by receiving a passenger on board without their consent and without notice. Altogether they were rough on me. I left the office much irritated, and on reaching my lodgings I sat down and wrote them a sharp letter, reproaching the firm with its inhumanity towards Huggles and its lack of consideration towards me.

All the answer I received was my discharge from the service of the company.

"Look here, Huggles," said I, "I have saved your life and have introduced you into a new world and this is my reward. I have an approving conscience within me that warms like a hot potato, but all the same I am sorry that I am out of place."

One day that I and Huggles were walking down Regent street I showed him with pride the contents of the shop windows.

"Nothing like this in your country, eh, Huggles?"

Then suddenly he went straight through a plate glass window, an enormous sheet. He had seen himself reflected in it, supposed it was a brother Corean and had advanced with less apathy than usual to meet him. A crowd assembled. Observations were passed. The shopkeeper was irritated. The native and I were obliged to pay for damages as estimated by the tradesman, who put the figures unreasonably high. I really had no notion previously how costly were these plates of glass.

Nor was this the only instance. Ten minutes after Huggles went through another sheet of glass for precisely the same reason. With a mind so unreceptive, so incapable of learning by experience, of opening to new ideas it was hopeless to anticipate a speedy end to these disasters.

The education of Huggles was likely to be costly. But worst of all was the certainty that it was no education. He could not progress. He could acquire nothing. As well expect to teach a person without ear to be a musician or one without faculty of distinguishing colors to be a painter.

I called a hansom, shoved the Corean in, followed and drove to a solicitor's office.

"I want to know," said I, "what is to be done with Huggles? I saved his life, and now he adheres to me like a leech."

"Go to the Corean legation," said the solicitor; "there they will free you of your incumbrance."

"Thank you, sir," said I, relieved. "What am I indebted to you for your opinion?"

"Six and eight."

I paid 6 shillings and 8 pence, and then ordered the driver to take us to the Corean embassy. The driver, after careering over half of London, declared that he could not find it. So I bought a London directory, which cost me something like 30 shillings, and I searched in it for the Corean legation, only to discover that there was none.

"Next best," said I, "is that of the Japanese. I will try theirs." That embassy would have nothing to do with Huggles. It washed its hands of him. Then I drove to the Chinese embassy and there met with a similar rebuff.

When we got back to my lodgings I was dispirited.

"Huggles," said I, "my conscience tells me that I did right in saving your life, yet I am beginning to find out that the following of conscience comes deucedly expensive, and is a sort of extravagant luxury to be indulged in only by those with a balance at their bankers' or in possession of a well-paid sinecure. I am getting to the end of my loose cash."

"Mahouglath-mahouglish," responded the Corean.

"No," said I, stamping. "It may be Mahouglath-mahouglish to you, but to me it is the same turned topsy-turvy. I am father, mother, nurse and special providence to you, and this is more than I bargained for."

He said nothing, but gazed placidly at me.

"Look here, Huggles," said I, "you go to bed, old man. I'll undress you, and pull off your boots, and undo your braces."

In fact, I was becoming desperate to be alone. I had my intended in London. I had not been able as yet to see her. How could I go to her house, take Huggles with me to witness our raptures?

"Yes," said I, "that is it, Huggles. You go to your downy pillow. That's the place for you. Your mind has been on the stretch all day, taking in new notions. Don't worry that poor organ any more. Here! you don't understand your waistcoat; you unbutton it and are getting out of it the wrong way. Leave me to fold up your things. Get into bed and sleep the sleep of conscious innocence; sleep away the strain on your poor intellect."

Having closed the door on Huggles, I dressed myself for conquest. I brushed my hair and put oil on it. I was going now at last to see Polly Jones—my Polly Jones. The attachment that subsisted between us was very tender and ardent. It was the more tender and the more ardent on my side because Miss Jones had £5,000 in the 3 per cents. My resolve had been, on my return, to have run in and out of her house daily, and for that reason had engaged lodgings at no great distance from hers; but hitherto I had been unable to call, Huggles had been in my way. Till freed from him I could not visit her.

Miss Jones subsisted comfortably on her small income. I had laid by a little money, not much, but something. I purposed being married at once, of spending a year or more with the object of my fondest affections, and then to have gone to sea again, for I am not an idle man, and I was not so old then as to think of abandoning work. Besides, I love the sea.

I pass over the exquisite moment when we saw each other, gazed on each other in speechless admiration till we found our tongues. Then—

"Oh, George!" said she, "we will have supper together. I have gibblet pie, and I will send out the girl for a nip of brandy. You seafaring men, I am well aware, like your glass of grog."

"Thank you," said I, "if you will put your lips to it and sweeten it, I shall not refuse." She laid the little table with a clean cloth. "I have some watercress," said she; "you do not get watercress at sea."

"No, nor the sight of you neither," I said, fondly. How pleasant that little room was! How snug! How homelike with my charmer there! How I panted to call Polly my wife, and to be able to enjoy the benefits of the £5,000 at 3 per cent. I sat rubbing my knees, smiling at the fire, where the kettle was beginning to sing.

"Polly," said I, with a quiver in my tone, "I have had an ocean of trouble since I saw you, and mountains of care have been laid on my shoulders, but a good conscience and the thoughts of you have sustained me under the burden."

"What was the burden, George? Can I help you to carry it?"

"No," said I, with a sigh, "I must carry it alone."

"Oh, let me share it with you!" exclaimed Polly, with an expression full of languishing tenderness. At that moment a scream, loud, piercing, prolonged, from down stairs. The maid had gone to the door with her hat on to fetch the brandy, when she recoiled into the hall before an apparition, and we heard her scrambling up the stairs shrieking. Behind her sounded a heavy tread.

"It is burglars!" gasped Polly.

The door burst open, and in floundered the servant maid, pursued by an object so strange, so indescribable, that her terror was explicable. This object was Huggles, but Huggles dressed at random, in reversed, unintelligent manner. He had left his bed after my departure and put on his clothes anyhow, and such as he could not get fitted he carried huddled under his arm. He had pursued me through the street and had waited at the door for an opportunity to enter. Opportunities do come to such as wait, and it had to Huggles. Thus it was that my Corean burst in on us. How he managed to walk and to mount the stairs, put together as he was, surpasses my comprehension. On reaching the room the maid fainted and my Polly Jones, scared by the apparition, went into hysterics and was carried by me to the sofa.

My rage, my indignation overmastered me. I turned on the Corean with the stare of a tiger in my eyes and bade him leave the house. He looked at me with stolidity and handed me a neatly folded packet of China paper. He had sighed in his bed and had come after me to place in my custody this additional particle of his soul.

"Go away!" I roared. "Are you not ashamed to present yourself before the lady on the sofa and the domestic on the floor in this preposterous condition? Am I never to be free from your presence? Never to escape your pursuit? Never to have an hour's respite from your annoyance?"

As he still hesitated, looking mildly at me, I went up to him, with fists clenched and foaming at the mouth.

"Go at once"—I put the paper parcel into my mouth—"or I will chew and swallow your soul."

The Corean elevated his hands in protest, and backed before me, and finally I drove him from the house. Then I both bolted and locked the front door.

I returned panting to the parlor to pacify my intended, and to bring round the maid by pouring a jug of cold water over her.

By degrees Miss Jones recovered herself. Then I told her the whole story.

"This," said I, "is my burden. How good of you to offer to assist me in bearing it."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Polly, "this is beyond any horror I could have conceived. No—never." Her expression became constrained, and her voice had a hard ring in it now, new to me: "It is absolutely impossible for me to think of approaching the hymeneal altar with you," said she, "so long as that monster haunts you. He would involve us in infinite difficulties. He would eat up my principal. Besides, we should never be left alone. Get rid of him, and I am yours. Five thousand pounds in the 3 per cents. will not suffice to maintain you and me and Huggles."

I walked to my lodgings in low spirits. My only thought was, how to rid myself of Huggles.

On reaching my quarters I learned that the ex-Governor had not returned. Stray scraps of clothing, and these, moreover, articles that civilized man considers indispensable, lay about the floor, whereas the vallance of the bed had been carried off and adjusted somehow to his costume.

A single rap at the door. A police constable entered to inform me that my Corean had been arrested and was locked up at the station, and would be charged on the morrow with creating a disturbance in the street and impeding the traffic.

"You will please to be at the court tomorrow, sir, at 11, when the case will be gone into."

Next morning, accordingly, I attended. I learned that Huggles had collected a crowd, that he had gone considerably to pieces as to his garments, that he had rendered himself liable as a nuisance to be severely dealt with.

He was fined and cautioned. Fine and cost came pretty high, and I had to enter into surety for him to the tune of £25 that he would refrain from disorderly conduct for the next three months. I paid the money, but gall was at my heart. I was by no means confident that the security would not be forfeited. I could not be always with an eye on Huggles.

I wrote to two eminent physicians who make mental disorders their specialty and are predisposed to discover insanity everywhere. I trusted that I could get them to sign a certificate of lunacy and might get my Corean locked up in an asylum. The more certainly to effect my plan I determined to conceal from them that Huggles was not a born Briton. I hoped that they would consider what was unusual in his manner as indicative of mental disorder.

This pretty scheme fouled. The placid face of the Corean, his steady eye and the restfulness of his general pose were too decisive against the theory of derangement to meet with acceptation.

"It is you, sir," said the physicians, "who are in a condition of serious nervous excitement. Your trembling hand, your roving eye, the quiver of your lips, all proclaim the approach of mental disturbance."

"I know it," said I, savagely. "It is I who will end in an asylum. What is the fee?"

Three guineas each. Six pounds six shillings was what I had to pay for being informed that Huggles was driving me mad.

"Come along, Huggles," said I, when the physicians were gone. "I will make an end of this. You have not seen Edinburgh, the modern Athens. We will go by the Scotch express. Old man, did you ever hear of the Inchcape Rock and the Abbot of Aberotock? No, of course not. But the Bass Rock, my boy, that will interest you."

I took him off by the night express that runs to York without stopping. Then on north. We saw Berwick by morning light and caught a glimpse of the Bass Rock in the offing.

"Do you see that?" I asked, pointing out of the carriage window. "Ah, ha! you will become better acquainted with that, old man."

We arrived in Edinburgh, and then I showed him all that should be seen. The weather was delightful. The view from the castle looking towards the Firth—there was nothing like it that I had seen anywhere.

"Ah, ha! you cannot come up to that in Corea. Here you have historic associations, and before you infinite progression."

"Mahouglath-mahouglish," said the ex-Governor.

I heard of an excursion steamer bound down the Forth to the Bass Rock. I took two tickets.

On a cloudless day we steamed towards the open sea. The fresh air, the smell of the salt ocean, the beauty of the scenery, the prospect of being rid of Huggles combined to make me cheerful. Yet I felt a wellspring of pity for the poor creature gushing forth in my heart. It is so when we part from a man whom we shall see no more, even though he has been a nuisance to us.

We reached the rock. We landed and dispersed over the islet. I led the Corean as far as I could from the maddening crowd, taking with me a rug and a basket of refreshments. I found a cave worn by wave and wind, and there I proposed to eat our frugal meal, that was composed of cold chicken, jam tartlets and two bottles of stout. But one of the latter had been drugged.

Not a shadow of mistrust hung over the brow of the Corean as he drank his bottle of stout, that which had been tampered with. He drank it to the last foam flake.

"Sleepy, old man?" I asked.

He nodded.

"Lie down, Huggles," said I, pitifully, and presently he was asleep. I unfolded the rug over him. Then I left him—left him in the cave of the Bass Rock, asleep, and returned without him to Edinburgh. I paid my account hastily at the hotel and took the night mail to London.

I thought I had effectually severed my connection with Huggles. But I was speedily undeceived. Suspicion had been aroused in Edinburgh by my returning without my companion, and by my hasty flight. The landlord of the hotel communicated with the police. They chartered a boat and went to the Bass Rock, where they found that Huggles had slept his sleep and was awake again. He was conveyed to Berwick and handed over to the English constabulary, which brought him to London, and I had a pretty sum to pay for the recovery of my Corean. Police costs are always heavy.

I had tried to be rid of Huggles by fair means, and had failed. I must have recourse to other means. That conscience which I had acquired at Sunday school was trampled out within me by the sense of self-preservation, a first law of nature.

I argued with myself. Was life sweet to Huggles? Could it be so when he was out of his stagnant element for which alone he was suited? If the life in which he now was gave him no satisfaction, why should he be plagued with it? Again, if he did not, could not, would not accommodate himself to progressiveness, to nineteenth century ideas, did he deserve to live? Was it not a law that the unfit must make way for the fit? Certainly, said I in answer to this and to the former queries, certainly not. After I had come to this conclusion, I drew out some of my little instruments, chartered a small vessel and engaged a crew.

"Huggles!" said I, "the sea! the sea!"

"Mahouglath-mahouglish," was his reply.

So we went to sea, and after a prosperous voyage we sighted Corea, the promontory, near which I had anchored before. Then I had the boat lowered, and I took the ex-Governor into it; we rowed ashore, and I left him there, whence we had taken him a year before. He said not a word, but his tears began to run, unite and drip from his nose. We had dressed him again in his Corean habit, and had expanded his umbrella above his head.

"Ta-ta, old boy," said I; "I have the green-gage jar all safe, should you require the particles of your soul. You know where to find them."

We tarried four days, anchored off the coast. It took two days for the news of his arrival to reach the capital, and two for the order for his decapitation to return.

I am not by nature an impatient man. So I lay to and waited.

On the fourth day the royal executioner arrived. I had treated myself to an excellent pair of field glasses. I rested my elbows on the gunwale and looked through them.

The mate stood by me with a speaking trumpet. I saw Huggles kneel down and fold his arms behind his back. His hat-umbrella was removed. Then I saw the executioner brandish his wooden cutlass.

Then an absurd weakness came over me, some salty moisture flaked the glasses, so that I could no longer see. I wiped them with my cuff. When I looked again Huggles's poor head was nearly off, but he was a stiff-necked being. I groped in the air. The mate understood me and put the speaking trumpet into my hand. I put the instrument to my lips, and as the head of Huggles fell I bellowed—

"Mahouglath-mahouglish!"

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

Eighty-six Kansas counties have refunded their bonds, reducing the interest rate in some instances from 7 and 8 to 3½ per cent.

On Brazilian railroads no baggage is transported free, and a passenger is allowed to take with him into the coach only a small hand bag.

The pronunciation of Mafeking is a difficulty to many. The name is correctly pronounced like Maffy-king—with the accent on the first syllable.

The manufacture of dolls did not begin until about sixty years ago. Before that time when little girls played "mamma" they prattled to babies made of rags.

The horse business is good all the world over. One hundred and fifty thousand horses and mules have been landed in South Africa since the beginning of the war.

Cape Nome is only two degrees below the arctic circle, and yet the probabilities are that within a year or two it will become the site of a town with all modern improvements.

Long before school boards were established in England, Canadian children were instructed free of cost between the ages of seven and twelve. This education is compulsory.

In France women are allowed to wear men's attire, but they must pay for the privilege. The amount of tax which a woman pays for wearing masculine garb is about $10 a year.

The costliest paintings of modern times are Meissonier's "1814" and Millet's "The Angelus." M. Chauchard gave 850,000 francs ($170,000) for "1814" and 750,000 francs ($150,000) for "The Angelus."

Considerable mystery has existed for several years as to the identity of the man in Denver, Col., who voted for Palmer and Buckner, in 1896. They received one vote in that State, out of a total of nearly 190,000.

A Scranton (Pa.) court is asked to grant the claim of one Isaac Sidebottom against the estate of John Shafer, deceased, for "entertaining the old man playing checkers" during a greater part of three years.

The toy trade may be traced back in Thuringia to the Middle Ages; it is the predecessor of the doll trade, which is of a much later date, the first doll having been manufacteured about forty or fifty years ago.

It is apparent, from recent statistics of farm stock values, that Nebraska is one of the most prosperous States in the Union. In January, 1895, the value of farm stock was $45,657,896; in January, 1900, the value was $102,145,734.

With a population of 5,500,000 London harbors every day 120,000 strangers. Some may remain a week, some a month, but all the year around there is an average of 120,000 visitors who are within the metropolitan boundaries.

In China, 12½ miles from the village of Lion-Chek, there is a mountain of alum, which, in addition to being a natural curiosity, is a source of wealth for the inhabitants of the country, who dig from it yearly tons of alum.

In 1889, there were, in the United States, in all, 3,800,000 depositors in the savings banks. Ten years later, in 1899, there were no less than 5,200,000 depositors. In 1894 each depositor had an average of $369 in bank; in 1899 the average had risen to $419.

The Mennonites at Groffsdale, near Ephrata, Pa., recently selected a pastor in novel fashion. There were ten candidates and ten Bibles were placed on a table before them. One contained a slip of paper and the preacher who selected this one was duly chosen.

Europe not only produces more than one-half of the world's wheat crop, but consumes almost the entire world's surplus. North America, on the other hand, raises between one-fourth and one-fifth of the world's crop and is the world's greatest surplus exporter.

When the sun is pouring down its rays upon the ocean at noonday none of them penetrate to a depth of over two hundred feet. Could a diver descend to that depth he would find himself shrouded in darkness as profound as though he were immersed in a sea of ink.

There is a vast amount of horse hair annually used in the United States for making and repairing violin, violoncello and bass viol bows. All of the hair comes from Germany and Russia, in which countries the tails of horses are generally allowed to grow much longer than here.

In the thirty years that the Pennsylvania anthracite mine law has been in operation 9,575 persons have lost their lives in and about the anthracite mines, or an average each year of 319. The chief of the bureau of mines says that the principal cause of accidents is the negligence of the employes.

Until now epileptics in Russia have been treated as insane. They have been confined in lunatic asylums in the same wards with hopeless lunatics. The Russian press undertook a crusade against these conditions, and now a building is to be erected where epileptics will receive proper medical treatment.

Do not buy land on which the trees are small and of not very thick growth. You will see that men who are experienced in buying farming land always go on this principle. Land thickly covered with timber indicates good land; where the trees are scattered and not very tall indicates poor land.

The New York Department of Highways has purchased four new sand sprinkling carts, which are to be used on the driveways of the park and on asphalted streets. They will sprinkle a fine layer of sand on the driveways to make rough places smooth, and by the same process it is thought that slippery asphalt pavements can be made safer when covered with ice or rain.

There are four old colored women at a home for the aged in Philadelphia whose ages aggregate 406 years, and there are several others in the institution who have passed the century mark. One of these old women, "Mother McDonald," was born in Valley Forge in 1779. That makes her 130 years old.

How Does It Seem to You?

It seems to me I'd like to go
Where bells don't ring nor whistles blow,
Nor clocks don't strike, nor gongs don't sound,
And I'd have stillness all around.

Not really stillness, but just the trees'
Low whispering, or the hum of bees,
Or brooks' faint babbling over stones
In strangely, softly tangled tones.

Or maybe a cricket or katydid,
Or the songs of birds in the hedges hid.
Or just some such sweet sounds as these
To fill a tired heart with ease.

If 'tweren't for sight and sound and smell,
I'd like a city pretty well,
But when it comes to getting rest
I like the country lots the best.

Sometimes it seems to me I must
Just quit the city's din and dust,
And get out where the sky is blue,
And say, now, how does it seem to you?

—Eugene Field.